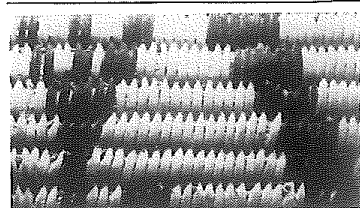


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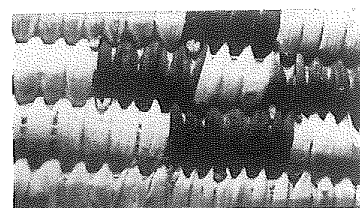
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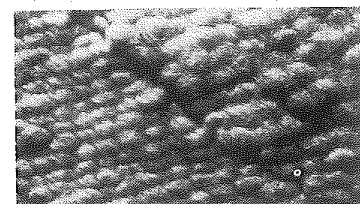
FREDERIC H. DOUGLAS, CURATOR



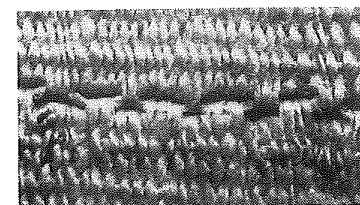
A
Pima-Papago
coiled basketry



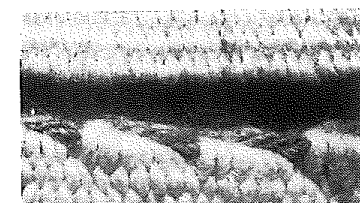
C
Modern Papago
coiled basketry



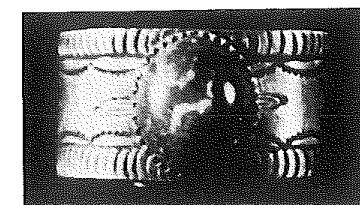
E
"Lazy line" in
Navaho weaving



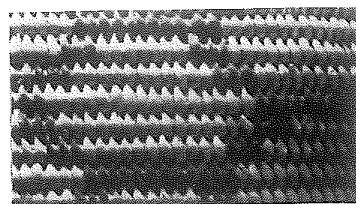
G
Central seam
in Chimayo
weaving



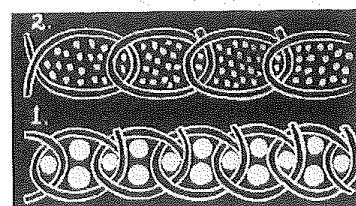
I
Chimayo
Blanket edge
finish. —
Navaho-Pueblo



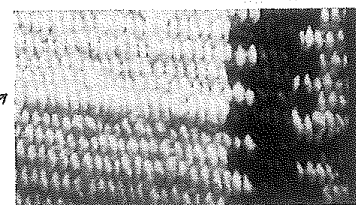
K
Navaho type
silver



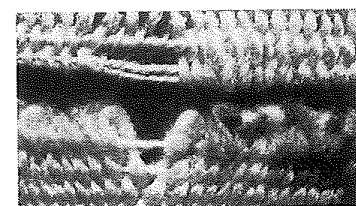
B
Western Apache
coiled basketry



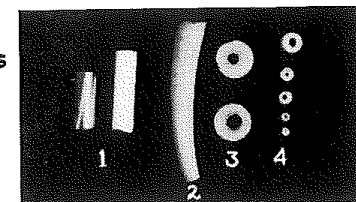
D
Pima-Papago
Cross-section of
coiled basketry
Western Apache



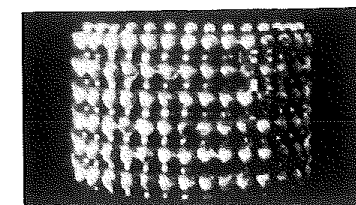
F
Ridge formed by
multiple warps
in Chimayo
weaving



H
Chimayo
Blanket edge
warps —
Navaho-Pueblo



J
Indian bead types
1. Wampum
2. Dentalium
3. Shell disk
4. Glass



L
Zuñi type
silver

Notes On Distinguishing Similar Objects, Part 1

LEAFLET 86

DECEMBER, 1939

1. **INTRODUCTORY.** Among the crafts of the Indian there are a number of types which, though made by different tribes, have a superficial resemblance to each other in shape, color, design or material. Many collectors—and for that matter, museums—have some difficulty distinguishing these types, with the result that pieces are wrongly identified and labeled. In order to help out this situation it is proposed to issue, in this series, occasional leaflets which will point out the ways to distinguish some of these puzzling similarities.

2. **PIMA-PAPAGO AND WESTERN APACHE BASKETRY.** Both of these groups make light cream or tan coiled baskets with designs in black. Though the designs do not ordinarily resemble each other they may do so, at least superficially, so that this design difference is not always sufficient to make the distinction clear. This is only true of the old style Pima-Papago basketry in which the light material is split willow twigs, as is the case with the Western Apache. Nearly all modern *Papago* baskets have a whitish background made of bleached yucca leaf (C). Its whiteness and rather soft consistency are not found in the work of either the Pima or Western Apache.

The way to distinguish the older type of Pima-Papago basketry from that of the Western Apache is to note the character of the coils. The Western Apache coils (B) have three slender round rods inside them. These rods are arranged in a triangle so that when they are wrapped by the sewing material a nearly round shape is formed (D-1). The space between each pair of coils is rather deep, so that each coil stands out very noticeably, creating a very evident corrugated effect. On the other hand Pima-Papago basketry has a coil (A) filled with either split cattail leaves—most common among the Pima; or strands of bear grass—most common among the Papago. This bundle of material tends to form a rather flat oval form (D-2) when enclosed by the sewing material. Each coil being rather flat there is little depth between two coils. Hence the surface is rippled rather than sharply corrugated.

Thus a sharply corrugated surface made up of little round coils indicates Western Apache; while a rippled surface of rather flat wide coils means Pima-Papago.

It must be pointed out that Chemehuevi, Havasupai, Walapai and Yavapai basketry also have the corrugated surface. The points of difference between these and Western Apache will be indicated in a later issue of this series.

3. **PUEBLO - NAVAHO - NEW MEXICO MEXICAN (CHIMAYO) WOOL BLANKETS.** These three groups of weavers all make striped wool blankets which superficially resemble each other. But the means of telling them apart are simple and nearly infallible. These identifying factors are concerned solely with technic, the way the blankets are made; for all three may use identical wools, dyes and designs.

Pueblo blankets are made on an upright loom like that of the Navaho, which is generally familiar to everyone. As the Pueblo weaver inserts the weft, or filler, threads to build up the pattern he carries each weft all the way across the surface of the blanket. Hence there are no diagonal lines appearing irregularly on the face of the finished blanket.

The Navaho woman, on the other hand, is extremely likely to weave on a section of the blanket which she can reach without shifting her position. This means that she creates a finished section of uneven shape, with diagonal lines appearing irregularly on its edges. Having done all she can from one position she moves to another. As she weaves the new section she creates

diagonal places to fit against those made when weaving the first section. These diagonal lines do not disappear, but remain clearly visible on the finished surface (E). Though there may be exceptions, the Pueblo weaver does not create these diagonal lines, hence their presence almost inevitably indicates a Navaho origin. Owing to the mechanics of his loom the Mexican weaver cannot make these diagonals. A Navaho woman may weave in the Pueblo manner and thus create a blanket which can only—if at all—be distinguished from a Pueblo one by other factors which cannot be discussed here. But the statement made above applies to the enormous majority of blankets.

The New Mexico Mexican weaver uses an horizontal loom in which the warp is controlled by heddles operated by foot pedals. But the width of the Mexican blanket is limited by the rather narrow framework of the loom. Therefore to make a wide blanket the Mexican has to do one of two things: weave two strips and sew them together (G); or string two sets of warps one above the other and make the weft, as it is inserted, cross the face of the upper warp and returns to its starting place across the lower warp. This set-up really amounts to one set of warp threads which has been folded. Apparently to strengthen the fold the Mexican weaver doubles or triples the warps at the fold. These extra warps make a thick band running lengthwise through the center of the finished piece (F).

This means that any blankets which are in two pieces sewn together, or have a noticeable ridge down through the center, have been made by New Mexico Mexican weavers. The name Chimayo, taken from a village north of Santa Fe, is usually given to this type of weaving. Actually these blankets are made in many places in New Mexico. Chimayo blankets are not Indian.

There are two other features which set Chimayo blankets apart from those of the Pueblos or Navaho. Both deal with the edges of blankets. One, illustrated by H, is concerned with warps. The Mexican strings a pair of warps along each side of the blanket. The Indians use but one. The second deals with edge finish and is illustrated by I. Pueblo and Navaho blankets have heavy twisted cords on their edges. Mexican blankets do not have these edge cords.

Blankets with pairs of warps on the edges, no edge binding and either in two pieces or with a central ridge, Chimayo Mexican; blankets in one piece with single warps on the edges, twisted selvage cords and no diagonal lines on the surface, Pueblo; blankets like the Pueblo but with diagonal lines, Navaho.

The above discussion applies almost exclusively to blankets having patterns of narrow stripes as this is the type which is likely to be wrongly identified. But the technical features described are true of all blankets made by these three groups. No consideration has been given in this discussion to Old Mexico Mexican and Indian blankets.

4. NAVAHO AND ZUNI PUEBLO SILVER JEWELRY. Both the Navaho and the Zuni learned to make silver jewelry from Mexican silversmiths some time not long after 1850. Since then the art has flourished among both. But two general lines of development have come into being, each Indian group using the same basic technical methods but creating its own ideas about decoration. The line between the two is very definitely not fixed, so that the distinctions to be pointed out merely indicate general trends and not fixed rules. Until someone makes a careful comparative study no definite statements can be made.

The main differences are these. The Zuni use turquoise settings very profusely and make relatively little use of designs stamped into the surface of the silver (L). The Zuni also tend to make more delicate pieces, some showing wire openwork and the like. Turquoise is most commonly used in rather small pieces, many of which will be set on a single piece of jewelry.

The Navaho, while they use much turquoise, prefer to use larger stones and rather few of them (K). One stone to a piece is the most common condition. The Navaho almost always use designs stamped into the surface with steel dies. The Navaho pieces are usually more massive and heavy, lacking delicate openwork and the like.

5. WAMPUM AND OTHER SHELL BEADS (J). Owing to a misconception the word "wampum" has come to be used for any kind of Indian shell bead, and even for commercial glass beads (J-4) used by Indians. Actually wampum is just one kind of Indian made shell bead and can be easily recognized. A real wampum bead is a cylinder, much longer than it is wide, and with a hole running through it the long way (J-1). All other Indian made beads are shaped like disks or wheels, with their thickness less than their diameter (J-3). Except for glass imitation wampum, the only bead which might be mistaken for wampum is that made from the dentalium or tusk shell (J-2). This little shell is more or less cylindrical, its length is much greater than its width and it is pierced from end to end. But, unlike wampum, it tapers from one end to the other and there is a slight curve from one end to the other. True wampum cylinders have the same diameter from end to end and are perfectly straight.

Text by F. H. Douglas. For comparative reading see the following:

WESTERN APACHE BASKETRY

1. Basketry of the San Carlos Apache—Helen H. Roberts. *Anthropological Papers*, Vol. 31, pt. 2, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1929

PIMA-PAPAGO BASKETRY

2. Basketry of the Pima and Papago—Mary Lois Kissell. *Anthropological Papers*, Vol. 17, pt. 4, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1916

NAVAHO WEAVING

3. Navaho Weaving—Charles Amsden. The Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, 1934
4. Navajo Shepherd and Weaver—Gladys Reichard. J. J. Augustin. 1936

PUEBLO WEAVING

5. Technique of the major Hopi crafts—M-R. F. Colton. *Museum Notes*, Vol. 3, no. 12, Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, 1931
6. Zuni weaving technique—Leslie Spier. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 26, no. 1, 1924
7. Leaflets 18, 89, 90, 91, 92-93, 94-95, 96-97—F. H. Douglas. *Indian Leaflet Series*. Denver Art Museum. 1931-1940

MEXICAN WEAVING

8. Indian blankets and their makers—George Wharton James. A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, 1920. Chapter 21.

NAVAHO SILVERWORK

9. A brief history of Navajo silversmithing—Arthur Woodward. *Bulletin 14*, Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, 1938

ZUNI SILVERWORK

10. Zuni silversmithing—K. M. Chapman. *Indians At Work* for Sept. 15, 1936. U. S. Office of Indian Affairs, Washington

WAMPUM

11. Beads and beadwork of the American Indians—W. C. Orchard. *Contributions*, Vol. 11, Museum of the American Indian, New York, 1929